THE
LIBRARY ASSISTANT
THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS
(Section of the Library Association)

HON. EDITOR: FRANK M. GARDNER
(Willesden Public Libraries)

No. 424 JANUARY, 1935

Contents

ANNOUNCEMENTS . . . . . Page 2
E. AND O. E. . . . . Page 3
PLAYS AND POETRY IN 1934 . . . . . Page 9
NOVELS OF 1934 . . . . . Page 16
CHILDREN'S BOOKS OF 1934. . . . . Page 21
THE DIVISIONS . . . . . Page 25
COUNCIL NOTES . . . . . Page 26
NEW MEMBERS . . . . . Page 26

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE next meeting will be a joint meeting with the London and Home Counties Branch at Chaucer House on Wednesday, 9th January, 1935, at 6.30 p.m. The speaker will be Mr. R. D. Hilton Smith, who will give his impressions of his recent American tour as the guest of the A.L.A. The title of his talk will be, "Things seen in America."

The following social events have been arranged at Chaucer House during January :

2nd January.—Dance, 7.45–12. Tickets 2s.

16th January.—Vocal and instrumental items by members of the staff of the Leyton Public Libraries.

25th January.—Debate : "That women are a menace in librarianship." For—Mr. T. E. Callander. Against—Miss E. Exley.

30th January.—A recital of gramophone records, with two sketches by members of the Ilford Public Libraries Staff.

Members are reminded that papers for the competition announced in THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT must be in the hands of Mr. Pugsley by 30th January, 1935.

The attendance at the December meeting, held at Mitcham, was only moderate; but a large number of the members present joined in the Round Table discussions on service counters, cataloguing, and records on cards, and a profitable and practical evening was spent. The briskness of the discussion on each topic, and the provocative views advanced, showed that each subject was worth a full paper and discussion in itself.

Before the meeting, members enjoyed the opportunity of viewing the new Mitcham Library, and when the party adjourned to the Town Hall it was honoured by an official welcome from the Mayor of Mitcham, who was accompanied by the Town Clerk.

Vacancy on Council.—The following members have been duly nominated for the vacancy on the London side of the Council:

Mr. T. I. M. Clulow, Kingston P.L.

Mr. D. E. Coult, Ilford P.L.

Mr. B. Oliph Smith, Middlesex County Library.

The election will take place by show of hands at the February meeting, in accordance with the rules. Members unable to be present are entitled to

record their votes in writing by intimating their choice to the Hon. Secretary not later than Tuesday, 12th February.

The Hon. Treasurer sends his usual note asking us to remind Transitional members that their subscriptions for 1935 are now due. Transitional members of the Central Association should send their subscriptions direct to him, but members attached to Divisions should send them to the appropriate Divisional Treasurer.

On Friday, 7th December, 1934, by courtesy of the Council of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, an inaugural meeting of the London and Home Counties Branch of ASLIB was held at Chatham House. Mr. H. H. Johnson, M.I.Mech.E., of "Engineering," Ltd., was elected Chairman, and Miss Evelyn Atkinson, of J. Walter Thompson, Ltd., was elected as Hon. Treasurer. It was decided that the next meeting of the Branch should take place by kind permission of the Council of the Royal Institute of British Architects, at their new premises in Portland Place, towards the end of January, 1935. Further particulars may be obtained from the Secretary of the Association, 16 Russell Square, London, W.C.1.

It is with very deep regret that we record the death of Mr. G. A. Stephen, Chief Librarian of Norwich, on Sunday, 9th December, 1934. Mr. Stephen was Chief Librarian of Norwich for 23 years, and had achieved some repute as a writer on local affairs. He will be missed in his home town; he will be missed as much in the Library Association, on whose Council he was a tower of strength. And he will be remembered for a long time as a friend to all library assistants.

E. AND O.E.

FRANK M. GARDNER

Atlas of current affairs, J. L. Horrabin (Gollancz, 3s. 6d.) **Creditors and how to escape them** (Lane, 3s. 6d.). **English journey,** J. B. Priestley (Gollancz, 8s. 6d.). **Experiment in autobiography,** H. G. Wells (Gollancz, 21s.). **Freedom and organization, 1815–1915,** Bertrand Russell (Allen & Unwin, 12s. 6d.). **Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson,** E. M. Forster (Arnold, 12s. 6d.) **Letters of Napoleon,** J. M. Thompson (Blackwell, 10s. 6d.). **Letters to a friend,** 2nd series, the Earl of

The Library Assistant

Oxford and Asquith (Bles, 10s. 6d.). **Manifesto,** F. P. S. I. (Allen & Unwin, 6s.). **Napoleon and his marshals,** A. G. Macdonell (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.). **The Quest for Corvo,** A. J. Symons (Cassell, 12s. 6d.). **Revolt against mechanism,** L. P. Jacks (Allen & Unwin, 3s. 6d.). **Shame the devil,** Liam O'Flaherty (Grayson, 10s. 6d.). **The Twilight of parenthood,** Enid Charles (Watts, 7s. 6d.).

THERE was a time when the writing of this article seemed a heaven-sent opportunity for proclaiming my literary opinions to other people. There was a time when my range was limited, my enthusiasm unbounded, and my outlook iconoclastic. There was a time when errors seemed impossible and omissions only a tribute to my power of discernment. I grow more and more conscious that that time is over. Hence the title of this article. It is also a very cunning device to forestall the people who wrote me wounded letters last year asking why I had omitted this or that. My list this year is no more than a catalogue of books I have liked and my article is no more than the reasons why I have enjoyed them. I do not set it up as being authoritative. In fact, I quite passionately do not wish to be authoritative. After a year of the editorial and pontifical *we*, it is a relief to use the singular pronoun for a while.

I should perhaps, as in previous years, attempt to look at the year's output of " General works " from the viewpoint of " the librarian trying to help and guide his readers " (how satisfying it is to quote oneself and how pompous to do it), but the advent of *Recommended books* has relieved me of that task. No *Recommended books* selections are included in my list, for obvious reasons, with one exception, of which more later. There are also excluded from my list a number of books which it should be superfluous to recommend, and which in any case I do not very much want to discuss. I have not included Lloyd George's *Memoirs* (which may be general literature, but is apparently not generals'); or Harold Nicolson's *Curzon*, which completes a trilogy that will stand for a long time as a monument to the futility of diplomacy; or John Buchan's *Cromwell*, or Winston Churchill's *Marlborough*, or the final volume of G. M. Trevelyan's great work, or Sir Roger Keyes' *Naval memoirs*, a good book spoiled by one of the silliest and most irrelevant prefaces I have ever read.

Two books that are on my list might have been quite legitimately omitted for the same reasons as those I have mentioned—J. B. Priestley's *English journey* and H. G. Wells's *Experiment in autobiography*. I include them, in one case to pay a tribute, in the other to make a complaint. With the publication of *English journey*, I took back all I had ever said about J. B. Priestley. (Subject

for a Bateman cartoon: the man who sneered at *The Good companions*.) I awaited its publication with some trepidation. I dislike people who boil, and I was afraid Priestley would boil when he saw the North of England. He simmered a little, and he occasionally rose into Prose, but in the main his book was a sober record of an actual state of affairs as seen by an acute observer and set down by a master technician. *English journey* was a necessary book, the most necessary book Priestley has yet written, because I am quite sure that until they read it, many people did not realize that depression represented anything more than a row of figures to shake one's head over at the breakfast table. When I came to London I was shocked profoundly by the complete non-realization by Southerners of what industrial depression had done to the northern counties. I know quite a few people to whom *English journey* came as a shock.

When I complain of *Experiment in autobiography*, I refer only to the second volume. When I was very young, I approached anything by Wells with bated breath. He was my idol, who could do or say nothing wrong. I read the vivid first volume of the autobiography with the feeling that here was my hero come back, after straying for a while into a forest of omnibus books. The old lucidity and power of analysis were here. With the second volume came disappointment. This was not a Wells telling the story of the flowering of the mind whose development he had described earlier, but a Wells exhibiting the arresting of that development. It is not disrespectful to speak thus of a great man; disciples have a right to complain when they are no longer being led. The first volume of the *Autobiography* is a great book; the second definitely is not. It is to be hoped that the publication of the Stalin-Wells conversations (which I should have included in my selection, for it is the best shillingsworth that has appeared on the bookstalls for a long time), will give Wells a new orientation. If it does not, the trouncing he received from Shaw will be his epitaph as a leader of modern thought.

There are several books on sociology and politics I want to talk about. The *Manifesto* of the Society of Progressive Societies and Individuals has already been dealt with in these pages, and there is little I can do now but to reiterate its importance to the student of modern social theories.

Bertrand Russell's new book, *Freedom and organization*, 1815–1915, is one of his best, and while one is reading it one has the feeling that one has with all Russell's books, that here at last is a guide one can trust. But Russell's two outstanding qualities are a profound cynicism and a capacity

for theory building. Facts are not enough for him; he must look behind and under the facts. Allied with a dangerous facility of style, these qualities hardly make him, as the Master of Balliol has pointed out in a review, an ideal historian. The theme of *Freedom and organization* is grafting of the ideal of liberty on to the idea of organization, a theme which gives Russell an opportunity for some masterly criticism and clever speculation. Ideas are thrown off by the dozen, stinging asides by the score. If the theme is forgotten, the admirer of Russell will not care much. But the book is recreation for philosophers, not a bible for students.

It is against such philosophers, probably, that Dr. Jacks' *The Revolt against mechanism*, is directed, and I doubt whether Bertrand Russell has much use for Dr. Jacks. But this little book is to be recommended as a sincere attempt at a synthesis of a strong section of contemporary thought. Both philosophic mechanism and economic are dealt with, and though the two things have met in communism, Dr. Jacks' is an uneasy position, in trying to condemn the one while appreciating the necessity for the other. To such little minds as my own, complete materialism is the only end to the road we are travelling, and if it is the wrong end it is because we are on the wrong road. Dr. Jacks thinks the road is right and the end is what we make it. One hopes that his optimism is justified.

Optimism is not the keynote of the next book on my list. Enter Cassandra in the person of Miss Enid Charles. *The Twilight of parenthood* is not one of those books that are read happily and daringly by engaged couples on Sunday evenings. Graphs of the growth of the indigenous native population of Algeria are a poor substitute for Marie Stopes, even though this is a book on population restriction. Miss Charles is not concerned with personal applications of her enquiry into population, which resolves itself into a statement that the Malthusian nightmare of over-population has been replaced by one of under-population. She directs attention, in two hundred sober pages, to a state of population growth "which seems likely to lead to rapidly diminishing population, and possibly to extinction in some of the leading civilized communities of the world." This is a nasty thought, and should give pause to some birth-control propagandists. But the author gives no support to the patriot who wishes to prohibit birth-control in his quest for man-power. Though giving some vigorous criticism to propagandists who are rapidly instilling the idea that a large family bears social stigma, she sees the present position as a result of the present structure of society, and her offer of a solution is based on a planned

world. This is a disquieting book in more ways than one. It upsets many of the ideas held by the "educated" classes, and forces some conclusions which are not usually associated with population problems.

I recommend Horrabin's *Atlas of current affairs*, not because it is of any permanent value, but because it is a very useful link in promoting deeper study by the newspaper reader. Its comments are strictly impartial, and its maps extremely well-drawn. I have been very pleased with the circulation of this book, which seems to indicate a growing interest in international affairs. But perhaps it is just that I have left the self-sufficient north.

I believe there have been more books written about Napoleon than any other person in history, and to include two more in an article of this sort seems to need some apology. But Macdonell's book was certainly one of the most readable books of the year, and J. M. Thompson's selection of letters is, so far as I know, the first selection for the layman in English, so what can I do? *Napoleon and his marshals* is in the unbuttoned vein to which I referred last year. Mr. Macdonell can smile, and does, at the sons of barrel-coopers, innkeepers, farmers, and tanners who achieved such eminence, while admiring them for their military talents. He can be satirical, about their treachery, greed, and astounding incompetence when away from the eye of their master. But he is neither witty nor satirical when he talks about Napoleon. That shabby figure has hypnotized him as he has hypnotized nearly all his biographers. His short paragraph about Waterloo is very nearly tragic. The picture that remains is of Ney madly beating at the British guns with the flat of his sword. As the author justly remarks, a writing pad and a telescope would have been more effective weapons. Mr. Macdonell's unspoken wish is that the English had not won the battle of Waterloo, and in view of the state of Europe for the next thirty years, I can find it in my heart to wish the same. Napoleon was betrayed, pursued by jealousy, pulled down by the mob, as are most great men eventually. His greatness, if there are any who doubt it, can be judged by reading *The Letters of Napoleon*. A complete *Letters of Napoleon* has never been published, and this book is a selection of a selection. To choose 300 letters out of an available total of 50,000 is a task that might well appal anyone, and honour is due to the editor for the excellence of his selection. The amazing diversity of interests, the almost superhuman activity and command of details, of the Emperor, is very well brought out. He could rule a great Empire, he could fight all Europe, he could look after a most tiresome family, and in the midst of it all he could notice the keenness of some English prisoners in doing forced labour,

and order them to be sent home as a reward, or he could find time to censure a priest for a bad sermon. While fighting for his life in the campaign of 1813, a tired and despondent man, he writes to Marie-Louise reproving her for receiving an official in bed, and adds that it is improper till over thirty! Reading these letters, one realizes why writers have been fascinated by Napoleon. He had a personality that has never been plumbed, that never will be plumbed, however many millions of words are written about him.

There will never be millions of words written about Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson—probably E. M. Forster's *Life* will be the only memorial. We should probably be better off if more people aspired to be like Dickinson and fewer like Napoleon—indeed, it is the present aspiration of little men to be Napoleons which threatens to wreck Dickinson's life work. But Dickinson would have wished for no other memorial than this, and certainly there could be no more sympathetic biographer than Forster. The book expresses the career of a man who was personally unobtrusive, who was not important in himself but only in his work.

If Liam O'Flaherty continues to be as frank in future as he is in *Shame the devil*, he will need no biographer at all. His book is offered "As a dagger to my enemies," and one imagines his enemies are a trifle embarrassed by it. Though I was vastly entertained by it, I hope it will not set a fashion. The thought of Beverley Nichols archly cataloguing his peccadilloes is an uneasy one. The second series of Lord Oxford's *Letters to a friend* is revealing in a way, though it reveals different things. It is a glimpse of the life of the cultivated man, intimate, urbane, and delightful, and chiefly concerned with literature, drama, and personal gossip. This is a bedside book, a book to possess. It grapples with no world problems, and that is its chief recommendation.

The *Quest for Corvo* I put near the end of my list, because it will fit nowhere else. If it were no more than a biography of one of the most extraordinary figures of modern literature, it would be important. Frederick Rolfe was a most elusive figure, and even if you find him a rascally and repulsive person, and have not the slightest interest in his work, A. J. Symons' book is an exciting and thrilling detective story.

Creditors and how to escape them is purely a discovery of my own, and it has taken an honoured place on my bookshelves beside *Archy and Mehitabel* and *The Diary of a nobody* as one of the very few really funny books. It is quite immoral and most subversive of the delicate financial structure on which modern society (so we are always being assured) depends. But it is riotously and indecently

funny, with just that undercurrent of bitterness which underlies all real humour. The well-known female novelist who wrote it has wisely perhaps concealed her identity, but I thank her for this book as I would not for any of her novels.

The prize for the worst book of the year goes without question to the author of *Dogs of war*.

PLAYS AND POETRY IN 1934

W. B. STEVENSON

Ah, wilderness! O'Neill (Cape, 7s. 6d.). **The Blind goddess,** Toller (Lane, 2s. 6d.). **The Bubble,** Bullett (Dent, 2s. 6d.). **Choice or chance,** Blunden (Cobden-Sanderson, 6s.). **Collected plays,** Yeats (Macmillan, 15s.). **A Collier's Friday night,** Lawrence (Secker, 5s.). **Colonel Wotherspoon and other plays,** Bridie (Constable, 7s. 6d.). **Cranes at sunrise,** Brown (Boriswood, 5s.). **The Crooked world,** Cole (Gollancz, 6s.). **Eden End, Laburnum Grove,** Priestley (Heinemann, 5s.). **The English in love,** C. C. and D. G. (Secker, 6s.). **Famous plays of 1934** (Gollancz, 7s. 6d.). **Festivals of fire,** Bottrall (Faber, 5s.). **Fisbo,** Nichols (Heinemann, 7s. 6d.). **A Hope for poetry,** Lewis (Blackwell, 5s.). **Homage to Sextus Propertius,** Pound (Faber, 2s. 6d.). **The Horoscope,** Horsnell (Hamilton, 10s. 6d.). **Landscape West of Eden,** Aiken (Dent, 2s. 6d.). **Maurice Harte** and **A Stag at bay,** Murray (Allen & Unwin, 3s. 6d.). **The Medium of poetry,** Sutherland (Hogarth Press, 5s.). **The Noise of history,** Lehmann (Hogarth Press, 3s. 6d.). **Open the sky,** Pudney (Boriswood, 5s.). **One-act plays of to-day** (6th series), Marriott (Harrap, 3s. 6d.). **The Orators:** new edition, Auden (Faber, 7s. 6d.). **Poems—group one,** Dunn (Cape, 5s.). **The Rock,** Eliot (Faber, 2s. 6d.). **Selected poems** (Secker, 5s.). **Squaring the circle,** Kataev (Wishart, 3s. 6d.). **Stony limits,** Macdiarmid (Gollancz, 6s.). **Summit and chasm,** Palmer (Dent, 5s.). **Superman,** Bunting-Dicebat (Constable, 2s. 6d.). **Three plays;** trans. Campbell, Krog (Boriswood, 7s. 6d.). **Three plays;** trans. Garnett, Turgenev (Cassell, 7s. 6d.). **Tusitala,** Hines and King (Chatto, 6s.). **Variations on a time theme,** Muir (Dent, 2s. 6d.). **Windfalls,** O'Casey (Macmillan, 6s.).

> *"We see them met in all their pomp and pride*
> *The year's momentous question to decide*
> *Who is the happy author, who is he*
> *That every babe in arms would wish to be?"*

I AM not so optimistic as these members of Mr. Bullett's Book Society. The books of the day, month, and year may come and go: the librarian can only watch them, sometimes with satisfaction, sometimes ruefully—like a punter watching the horses he has backed. Selection is necessary; and

here is one selection: few of them may be stayers, but they are not all losers.

We begin with Mr. Priestley, who has recently proved himself as successful a man of the theatre as novelist. *Laburnum Grove* is a play about a delightful scallawag: the humours of suburban life among the "Tudor palaces" are touched on without being obvious: the cloak of respectability is deftly twitched aside for a few moments; and life resumes its ordinary course. *Eden End*, by the same author, is more ambitious. It is a study of a group of harassed people; well constructed, with all the elements of good drama. We may occasionally glimpse the shadow of Tchekhov; but Mr. Priestley has a way of his own, and *Eden End* deserves its success.

Eugene O'Neill's *Ah, wilderness!*, for all its pretentious title, has shed much of the gloom of *Mourning becomes Electra*. The play is a simple study of adolescence, almost sentimental at times, but never unbearably so. *Days without end*, in the same volume, provides an excuse for the belated appearance of that dual personality who haunted *The Great God Brown*. The play has its moments, and highly dramatic ones: but so much of it seems strained and artificial that one remains a little unconvinced. A performance would decide.

W. B. Yeats's *Collected plays* is a noble volume, and a worthy companion to the collected poems of last year. Here is a poet who has kept his artistic integrity, and whose outlook has broadened and matured with the years. From the early *Countess Cathleen* (1892), to the short but brilliant *Words upon the window-pane* (1934), there is not a play without some significance in the book, either as an experiment in theatre or verse. To bracket anyone with Mr. Yeats seems insolent, yet the plays of T. C. Murray, *Maurice Harte*, and *A Stag at bay*, are of the same school. Mr. Murray's plays are not very well known in England. Yet he is a tried dramatist: his characters live: he has sincerity and imagination; why we have not seen more of his plays is a mystery. *Maurice Harte*, concerning the troubled mind of a young man about to take orders, is a fine study of the religious temperament, and a work full of dramatic situations. *A Stag at bay* is a one-act play of industrial conflict and the power of the mob to subdue the individualist: a powerful and compact piece of work with a finely tragic ending.

After *Within the gates*, one expects much from Mr. O'Casey, but *Windfalls* is on the whole a disappointment. One can sense the moods that went to the writing of these short plays and poems, but their cynicism evokes little but depression. Mr. Marriott continues in his good work, and *One-act plays of to-day* is a worthy successor to his other collections. There are ten one-act

plays here, all of them well written: this is a book to be welcomed by all dramatic societies. *Famous plays of* 1934 contains six full-length plays. *Touch wood*, *Men in white*, *The Maitlands*, *Queen of Scots*, *The Old folks at home*, and *Family affairs*. This is a feast for the playgoer and play reader for which he should thank Mr. Gollancz. All of the plays have been successfully performed, and some of them are more than mere plays of the moment.

There have been a number of translations this year, and among the best are Helge Krog's *Three plays*. Krog is a dramatist new to England, and although in the direct line of Scandinavian drama from Ibsen, he has little of the gloom of that Northern sage. Krog is nearer kin to Schnitzler in these three domestic comedies. His characters are created through deft dialogue; he has a sense of humour tinged with cynicism; there is little or no action, yet these comedies are very good "theatre." The translation by Roy Campbell contains nothing that would betray their foreign origin, and a performance of *Happily ever after* or *Triad* might make a success. Turgenev's *Three plays—A Month in the country*, *A Poor gentleman*, and *A Provincial lady*, have been translated by Constance Garnett in her usual impeccable manner. These feckless Russians of the last century are amusing: the plays contain many humorous touches, and can hold their place even with Tchekhov. From Germany comes Toller's *The Blind goddess*, an indictment of the machine of justice. The treatment is episodic, and the theme of two people wrongly accused of murder is treated in a spirit of bitter irony. The conclusion has an unexpected, though logical, twist. Not an after-dinner play, this, but a work of intelligence for the serious minded. As a contrast we have had Kataev's *Squaring the circle*, a hilarious affair dealing with the housing shortage in Moscow. Two students, living in a single room, both decide to get married on the same day, with consequent complications. This delightful little comedy comes as a relief from the deadly seriousness of most Soviet literature: evidently the sense of humour has not fled with the Tsarist régime.

From the realities of life in Russia, we come to the romantic figure of R. L. Stevenson. *Tusitala*, by Leonard Hines and Frank King, could hardly be bettered as a stage presentation of this vagabond of literature. We follow him from Edinburgh to San Francisco, back to England, and then on the last journey to Samoa. This is an absorbing chronicle, with a "Fat" part for a good actor: R. L. S. lives and talks on the printed page, and he should be a success in the theatre. Lawrence's *A Collier's Friday night* is an early work, but we can see in it much of the stuff that made Lawrence the greatest of his genera-

tion. The setting is a homely one; and that perpetual theme of Lawrence's, the mother and son in conflict with the father, is well thought out and aptly dramatized. A work more for Lawrence enthusiasts than playgoers, but of much more charm.

That talented doctor from Glasgow, Mr. "James Bridie," has published *Colonel Wotherspoon and other plays*. Mr. Bridie is a born writer of comedy, and it is to be hoped that before long we shall see these plays in London. *Colonel Wotherspoon*, the story of a best-seller, is a joyous piece of work. The characters may be a little larger than life, but Uncle Tom and Mrs. Kishmul, though caricatures, are a sheer delight: the satire of the literary world is a keen one. Of the other plays in this volume *The Girl who did not want to go to Kuala Lumpur* is probably the best. In a disarming and characteristic preface, the author claims that his plays are not as bad technically as he was led to believe, and quotes, "What's all this about edification? Are you pleased or are you not?" He is right; this book proves once more that Mr. Bridie is an adroit dramatist, and that we can also look for intelligence and a new point of view from him—something sufficiently rare on the modern stage.

Satire has been a notable element in the poetry of the year, for no less than four lampoons of the current literary racket have been published. The most comic is undoubtedly *Superman; the complete poems of Robert Baby Bunting-Dicebat*, edited by Ephraim Pundit. The august noses of Mr. Eliot and Mr. Pound are tweaked, the "active" school are kicked in the rear, Miss Stein is slaughtered *en passant*, and a few stray shots made at Davies and others. The book contains some gems, although some of the jokes are decidedly fourth form. A few custard pies are never amiss, however. Gerald Bullet, in *The Bubble*, writes of a best-seller that was never written, and lambastes the critics, the public, the booksellers, and the publishers with an unsparing hand. This is a poem sparkling with epigram, and it races along merrily without flagging.

The Horoscope, by Horace Horsnell, like *The Bubble*, is written in heroic couplets, and the targets are very much the same. This a fine-looking book in a brave dress, and although it delivers many shrewd thrusts, it is over-long. With *Fisbo*, by Robert Nichols, something more ambitious is attempted. Armed with a preamble and a full apparatus of notes, Mr. Nichols makes us fear something rather portentous. It is a book of sustained brilliance, however: Mr. Nichols has a nice hand with his couplets, an adroit sense of rhythm, and his rhymes, though a little outrageous, are clever and original. The story of Fisbo's first literary efforts, his use of publicity, his rather shoddy entry into

society, and his passage through all the literary cliques in the Metropolis, will bring chuckles of recognition to many more than the thousand readers the publishers seem to anticipate.

The Crooked world has all the vehemence of a steam whistle: many of the poems are mere shouts of exasperation, and Mr. G. D. H. Cole is no technician. But he has the saving graces of sincerity and a sense of humour. Mr. Cole is out to irritate, and if this book could be sent to a few of our more rabid Conservatives, it would probably hasten their end. Here is *Proletarian ditty*:

> *" Put the thing through quickly*
> *Wage the class war slickly*
> *'Ang the rich from lamp-posts high*
> *But don't 'ang me.*
>
> *Stick to Marx, my 'earty,*
> *Damn the Labour Party,*
> *Keep the 'Ell fires burning for*
> *The Bourgeoisie."*

Mr. Eliot and Mr. Pound, the despair of the tyro and the idols of the intelligentsia, have both given us new books this year. Eliot's *The Rock* has for theme the building of a church. Except for some magnificent choruses, equal to anything he has written, there is little trace of Eliot the poet. His bricklayers who discuss the history of the Church and the Douglas Credit scheme are beyond all belief. *The Rock* may be a good pageant, but it is a poor play. Pound's *Homage to Sextus Propertius* is the Pound of some years ago, and a more likable, less recondite poet. This is mainly for the initiated; but it is a book that might repay the ordinary reader who is willing to take a little trouble.

Edmund Blunden's *Choice or chance* presents a new aspect of this subtle nature-poet. Satire and epigram are essayed, with some charming results. Mr. Blunden is never negligible, and there are poems here which will be classed with his best work. *Summit and chasm*, by Herbert Palmer, is a varied collection of mainly lyrical poems. Aloof from the main stream of poetry, Mr. Palmer chooses many themes of common currency, yet illumines them afresh by the simplicity of his diction and his sincerity. His satiric poems are terse and brilliant; but he is at his best in the lyric and meditative poem.

Messrs. Dent have given us cause to be grateful by the issue of new poetry at a reasonable price. Two volumes from their new series are of great dis-

tinction. Edwin Muir's *Variations on a time theme* is a deeply philosophical poem, and a work of a mature talent. This meditation on man's destiny compels attention by its power and a certain stark beauty. Mr. Muir is a poet of this age, and has produced a work that should live. It is some time since we have had a poem from Mr. Conrad Aiken, and *Landscape West of Eden* has been worth waiting for. The Legend of Eden has been approached in many ways, but never better than in this subtle and beautiful narrative poem. The free rhythms of the verse are fluent and pleasing; this is a book to be read.

Ronald Bottrall's *Festivals of fire*, based on part of the *Golden bough*, may strike many as being perversely obscure. Mr. Bottrall ranges through space and time in abrupt transitions: his verse has a brittle modernity, and many recondite allusions, but also has its felicities. The shorter poems that form the latter half of the book are in the same manner.

> *"James, we will have my Protean head*
> *Served as the focal point of the meal, so see*
> *To it that the eyes are glazed expertly into a pair*
> *Of reflectors."*

—this has the element of surprise that we find in surrealiste painting. Though we may doubt all the claims made on his behalf by Mr. Leavis, Bottrall is a man of parts, and a poet of interest. Mr. Hugh McDiarmid's *Stony limits* are indeed difficult to climb. Some of his words might daunt even a lexicographer: need the new poetic vocabulary be as windy as this? He can write simply and well when he pleases, however: his Scots dialect poems are among the best of their kind; and he can distil poetry even from Communism and the theories of Major Douglas. Mr. McDiarmid is in the van of the Scottish Renaissance, and a poet worth our attention.

Contemporary themes are represented in Spender's *Vienna*, already recommended in these columns, and in John Lehmann's *The Noise of history*. Lehmann also takes Vienna as his leading subject, and his verse has the speed and urgency demanded by his theme. The increasing terror of the city and of the unemployed waiting at the street corners is well portrayed: "Violence is almost visible, like a smouldering fuse under the city, as it creeps towards explosion."

Alec Browne's *Cranes before sunrise* is the expression of an individualist in lyric poetry: he says that his verses are experiments; yet some of them have considerable achievement, especially the *Theme and variations*, in which the sights and sounds of a summer day are exploited in a series of ingeniously

linked lyrics. *Poems—group one*, by G. W. M. Dunn, is another book by a new writer. Mr. Dunn speaks of machines, and gives them a life of their own, but he is not unaware of the implications of our mechanized world. His sympathies are for the wage slave and the manual worker: a poet of the people with a new turn of thought. John Pudney's *Open the sky* contains a poetic play and a collection of lyrics. The play *Joseph* has daringly used a series of Biblical characters to illustrate a contemporary theme: that the experiment succeeds is a proof of the poet's quality. Mr. Pudney's verse is of a Spartan quality: his style is terse with a minimum of description; his freshness of outlook promises much.

Anthologies this year have been fewer, and among the best is C. C. and D. G.'s *The English in love*, a welcome successor to *The National Gallery*. The extracts chosen are admirable: the book is an unconventional one, and the decorations by John Austen very much in keeping with the material. Mr. Aldington has done well in his editorship of Lawrence's *Selected poems*. The good things that had to be picked out in the collected volume are all here, and all the aspects of Lawrence's poetry are represented. A delightful little book comes from the Cambridge Press, Miss Sharpley's *The Poet's year*. This is a series of lyrics from all periods of poetry, on the changing seasons. Many of the selections are inevitable; but even the most jaded anthology taster will find something new.

Two very able books on the theory of poetry have appeared. James Sutherland's *The Medium of poetry* is a sound piece of work, which does much to prove that *Inspiration* in poetry is not so spontaneous as we imagine. Comparing earlier and later versions of a number of poems, Mr. Sutherland's thesis is that the medium of verse in itself has done much to shape the poet's experience, adding or taking away from the original thought. A neglected aspect of criticism, ably written. C. Day Lewis' *A Hope for poetry* is a credo by one of the finest poets of this generation. This is a book with some authority, coming from a man who knows his job. The technique of modern verse is discussed, and much light is thrown on its so-called obscurity; while the illustrations from such poets as Auden and Spender support the contention that new modes of thought are coming to fruition.

Finally, let me mention that Spender's *Poems* and Auden's *The Orators* have both appeared in new and revised editions. These two books are in the vanguard of modern verse, and are not to be missed.

The Library Assistant

NOVELS OF 1934

T. E. CALLANDER

SOME put their trust in princes, which is unscriptural, and some in an alibi, which is Dickensian, but give me a tendency. At the end of each year, I sit before my typewriter with a blank and virgin mind, confronted by a pile of novels, and I range to and fro like a questing hound in search of a tendency. (The feat of ranging to and fro in a sitting position should not be attempted except by the very limber.) On one occasion, the only tendency I could find to support me was the likelihood of the Irish Free State to find indecency in every novel of distinction that had been published in the past year. And a very good tendency it was, and made a most amusing and instructive article whose only failing was that it brought down on my decent head a number of letters from the Irish Free State accusing me of those very crimes for which my selections had been refused admittance to that stronghold of purity. So this year I play for safety. Length. I nail a colour of inordinate length to my mast, and leave Mr. de Valera to do his worst with me.

One could, were it not for the stern insistence of the Editor that this article should at least make some colourable pretence of evaluating the novels of 1934, very profitably discuss the inner significance of the return of the long novel. One could examine the long novel from the commercial standpoint, and determine whether somebody had taken lessons from Covent Garden on the advantages of selling in bulk, and has decided that it is more profitable to sell 700 pages for ten and sixpence, rather than 300 pages for the more usual seven and six. Or one could examine the mantle of the tribe of Leavis, and show with a wealth of allusion that the short novel of the immediate post-war period was short, because it was written from an empty head, and that the younger novelists could not write long novels because, pad they never so wisely, they had very little to say. Or one could talk about Mr. Hugh Walpole, with biting references to wounded snakes. But instead, we will get to business and talk about the long novels of 1934.

Pride of place must surely be given to Mr. Robert Graves, whose two companion books, *I Claudius* and *Claudius the God* (Arthur Barker), must be given pride of place as the outstanding novels of the year. It has been for long enough a reproach to post-war writers that they number amongst them no giants of a stature equal to the colossi of the Victorians, that there was none among them who could give us a work of the calibre of a Dickens, nor even of

the lesser luminaries of his time. I think Mr. Graves has removed this reproach with his study of Tiberius Claudius Germanicus, the poltroon who became a potentate, the shrewd and benevolent ruler who became a bloody tyrant in his old age. The picture that is drawn for us is so natural in its colours that one feels that it must surely have been drawn from the most authentic sources, and yet the narrative is so free from pedantry that only the formidable list of authorities quoted in the preface to *Claudius the God* assures me that Mr. Graves is giving us Claudius the man of history rather than Claudius the figment of his magnificent imagination. I am cautious of extravagant eulogy, but I am confident that these two novels will live as one of the finest literary achievements of this half of the twentieth century.

The Claudius books, with their rich magnificence, are an interesting contrast to another novel sequence set in ancient Rome—Jack Lindsay's *Rome for sale* and *Cæsar is dead* (Mathews and Marot). There one finds the antithesis of Mr. Graves's measured tread. Instead, a counterpoint treatment, weaving together the main theme of the murder of Cæsar with the subordinate but complementary themes of the private lives and loves of individuals. The result, though interesting, has an incoherence which seems to indicate that the counterpoint method should be left to Aldous Huxley and to one other. That one other, Jules Romains, in his colossal novel which is appearing with machine-gun rapidity under the generic title *Men of good will* (Lovat Dickson), has undertaken an experiment which stuns the reader with its gigantic scope, but of whose ultimate success one cannot yet be assured. In the first volumes of the series, one had to be content to read a series of episodes, apparently unconnected save by the tenuous unity afforded by the assurance that the city of Paris was not only the setting but the main character of the book. As the work has proceeded, the purpose of the author has become more apparent, and the notes sounded by individual instruments in his orchestra begin to harmonize. When one reaches *The Humble*, the purpose becomes increasingly clear, but I feel that many more books are needed before M. Romains achieves his final harmony. It is a tribute to his powers that, after reading the first six books of *Men of good will* one should still look forward with some eagerness to 1935 and the successors in the series that it will bring forth.

Another long novel that interested me was Edward Sackville West's *Sun in Capricorn*. Its theme, of a group of young men, of aristocratic birth, who conceived of themselves as a kind of social gadfly, committing crimes against society for the good of society, is but an extension to the *n*th of the Robin

Hood fantasies of childhood, but the treatment of the theme gives it a rare distinction. Its prose is of a rare delicacy, and its characters are subtly presented, and the whole book has an elusive quality that defies analysis but that prompts reading and re-reading until this quality is captured.

Other novels, equally exemplifying the return of the big book, but widely diverse in theme and treatment, are Margaret Irwin's *The Proud servant*, Neil Bell's *Bredon and Sons*, Shokholov's *And quiet flows the Don*, and Hans Fallada's *Who once eats out of the tin bowl*. *The Proud servant* is an excellent and typical product of that revival of popular interest in history which has been so notable a feature of the past few years. It cannot be denied that the revival, perhaps through its determination to be popular, has brought forth some peculiar history, but it has also created a public for some excellent historical novels, this not the least notable. Miss Irwin has given such a real and vital study of Montrose in her novel that it seems a pity that more budding historians do not forsake their pretensions and admit as novels the smart reconstructions that they pass off as veritable and historical studies. *The Proud servant* is a worthy successor to *Royal Flush* and, I hope, the precursor of others as fine. Neil Bell, in *Bredon and Sons*, seems at last to have found his own country. I have said some unkind things in the past about Mr. Bell. Never have I suggested plagiarism, but I have complained of finding his novels reminiscent, not of a type, but of individual books by other writers. He has seemed to have an uncanny faculty for taking the germ of a seed that another had planted, and making of it something new, but not something altogether strange. The result was always worth reading, but always unsatisfying. It seemed that Mr. Bell had great technical gifts but little inspiration. *Bredon and Sons* is the novel for which we have waited too long. It is a full-bodied tale of the Suffolk coast, and, as a Suffolk man, I can vouch for it that Mr. Bell has captured the real spirit of a county that is by no means so silly as some Yorkshiremen would have it.

Hans Fallada has descended from the rather lofty pedestal upon which he was perched by the cognoscenti after the publication of *Little man what now*, and *Who once eats out of the tin bowl* seems to have attained the status of best seller in this country. It is an unusually successful specimen of the tract novel, an indictment of the prison system which leaves a convict as a derelict in society with no other harbour open to him than the prison from which he has come. The usual failing of the tract novel, as a very brief acquaintance with Upton Sinclair shows, is that, while the special cause which it pleads may be excellent, its characters are puppets whose joints creak audibly as the author pulls the

strings, or else they are such angels of light that even the most crassly stupid society would do them no injury. Fallada avoids these faults. His hero Kufalt is the reverse of heroic, and none of his associates deserves or gets one's sympathy. But at the end of it all one feels that it is society and not Kufalt that is to blame. Fallada is definitely convincing, far more so than was Mr. A. P. Herbert, in *Holy deadlock*, his study of the foolish divorce laws of this country. Mr. Herbert made his case good, but his novel lacked the conviction of *Who once eats out of the tin bowl*, because its characters were so intolerably full of honour that they seemed to go to bed, even with their dear friends, sanctified by the blazon of the old school tie.

Edward Shanks's *Tom Tiddler's ground* was good of its kind, the cradle to the grave novel and, though not inordinately long, deserves a place in the gallery of big books of the year. And the last and one of the longest of them all, Shokholov's masterly *And quiet flows the Don*, was perhaps one of the finest, and comes nearest to Graves's and Jules Romains's works as a major achievement. This kind of book must be superlatively well done if it is to succeed. How well it must be done is to be seen when *And quiet flows the Don* is compared with Vardis Fisher's *I see no sin*. The comparison may seem a little forced, but there is an essential similarity. They are both studies of a primitive communal life, but where Shokholov tells his tale with a restraint which loses nothing to the harsh brutality of the people whom he describes, and presents an unforgettable picture of a people, Fisher churns out one trauma per chapter to his hero's psyche, and succeeds only in being sordid.

If there has been nothing startling in 1934, the rank and file have had a good year. C. S. Forester has at last stopped writing about a man who faced fearful odds for the ashes of his fathers, and in *The Peacemaker* developed with considerable ingenuity the theme of a scientist who tried to intervene in the affairs of the world and to blackmail Governments out of their evil ways. The plot is neatly worked, and the sub-plot, the tale of the scientist's private life, is well done. Richard Aldington, in *Women must work*, gave us a competent piece of literary carpentry which, though eminently readable, might have been written by any one of a hundred equally competent carpenters. One would hesitate to say that Mr. Aldington has begun to decline as a writer, but it will be generally agreed that *Women must work* is a far cry from *Death of a hero*. Norah James, in *Straphangers*, gave another twist to the Grand Hotel situation, and succeeded better than most in being credible, probably because we don't know and meet very often the people who frequent grand hotels and luxury liners and

such-like haunts of the very rich and the ravening poor, whereas we do know the sort of people who write in Tubes.

In *This way to heaven* Caradoc Evans distilled what surely must be the last drop of his venom and paraded his beastly Welsh drapers once again. This is, I think, another case where a new line might be tried. I am quite willing to accept once and for all the hypothesis that all London drapers and milkmen are Welsh scoundrels, or *per contra*, and with the compliments of the season to the South Wales and Monmouthshire Division, that they are nothing of the sort. One way or the other—I am quite satisfied, but I wish Mr. Evans would let it go.

One of the most interesting minor books of the year was *A Handful of dust*, by Evelyn Waugh. Mr. Waugh is an interesting man. After his wickedly clever *Decline and fall*, it seemed depressingly likely that he would go on being wickedly clever to the end of his days, and would simply end up as a sort of wicked uncle to Beverley Nichols. That fear is dispelled now. His last novel had all the cleverness of *Decline and fall*, but its people were real people. Not very pleasant people, it is true, but living and credible. With great success Mr. Waugh put them down on paper, and with even greater success he refrained from chivying them or moralizing, or even sentimentalizing over them, but just left them in their unpleasantness with the cold detachment of a biologist studying under a microscope one of the less romantic organs of the human body.

The United States has been interesting this year. Ernest Hemingway gave us *Winner take nothing*, which was superb Hemingway, but James Cain trumped his ace by giving us *The Postman always rings twice*, which was better Hemingway than the master himself will ever write. William Faulkner's *Dr. Martino* has done me a lot of harm. Innumerable novels have been written on the subject of Anglican priests who become afflicted with doubts. Their position is generally depicted as acutely uncomfortable, and I begin to sympathize with these apostates. For years I have maintained, in the teeth of Mr. Gerald Gould, that Faulkner is a writer of real significance. And the Leavises have agreed with me. But I cannot deny the truth of Mr. Gould's contention that Dr. Martino was in many places plain *Saturday Evening Post* or even less. I am not yet ready to commit myself to open heresy, but I waver. Thornton Wilder has changed his spots with a vengeance. We had become accustomed to him as a writer of wistful prose, rather akin to Cabell, but without his pretentious pedantry. And now, with *Heaven my destination*, he goes all Sinclair Lewis, and presents to us a riotous picture of an American chump from the

Bible belt. His hero is a revolting but perfectly plausible figure, although the book as a whole is a trifle sketchy, and one feels that Mr. Wilder has poached, not too successfully, on the preserves of his Nobel colleague. Thomas Bell, again, has gone different, and *Striker Godown* was to me a disappointment. It is competent and readable, but there are too few who can write with the richness that made *Equestrian portrait* memorable.

Having got so far, I feel entitled to lapse into the time-honoured gambit "space does not permit," and to mention briefly a few other works that deserve mention in this survey. Three books of short stories that should not be missed are H. A. Manhood's *Crack of whips*, and Winifred Holtby's *Truth is not sober*, with the veteran Edward O'Brien's *Best short stories of* 1934. Elinor Mordaunt's *Collected tales* were welcome, and D. H. Lawrence's *Modern hero* has enabled us to heave a sigh of relief or regret, according to taste, at the positively last appearance of his posthumous work. Colette was her usual witty and charming self in the *Innocent wife*, and a notable first novel was Patrick Kirwan's *Black exchange*. More will be heard of Mr. Kirwan. The best blood of the year was without doubt Dorothy Sayers's *Nine tailors*, which combined an ingenious plot with some fine writing and some astonishing knowledge of the noble art of campanology. And Angela Thirkell repeated the success of *High rising* with *The Demon in the house*, a really funny book. Stella Gibbon's *Bassett* had some choice passages, notably that one describing the rout of two truculent domestics, but I foolishly opened the book hoping for a repetition of the glorious *Cold comfort farm*. And so, scamperingly, to an inelegant ending, and the reflection that, though no year is one-quarter as good as one anticipates after reading the spring announcements, the novel reader fared very well in 1934.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS OF 1934

MARGARET WATT-SMITH

Adventures of Toutou, Lewis (Constable, 3s. 6d.). **Alice in orchestra-land,** La Prade (Cobden-Sanderson, 3s. 6d.). **Beasts and saints,** Waddell (Constable, 5s.). **Bibi goes travelling,** Michaelis (Allen, 7s. 6d.). **Children's matinée,** Streatfield (Heinemann, 6s.). **Christmas holiday book,** Daglish and Rhys (Nelson, 3s. 6d.). **Coot club,** Ransome (Cape, 7s. 6d.). **Crazy Quilt** (Scribners'). **Flying classroom,** Kästner (Cape, 7s. 6d.). **Happy families,** Graham (Cape, 7s. 6d.). **Infants of the zoo,** Boulenger (Dent, 7s. 6d.). **News for children,** King-Hall (Nicholson, 5s.). **A Pageant of Chinese history,** Seeger (Routledge, 8s. 6d.).

The Library Assistant

Polly-who-did-as-she-was-told, Baker (Blackwell, 3s. 6d.). **A Royal cinderella,** Campbell (Oxford, 6s.). **Story of Barbar,** De Brunhoff (Methuen, 7s. 6d.). **Tale of two horses,** Tschiffely (Heinemann, 6s.). **The Turf-cutter's donkey,** Lynch (Dent, 5s.). **"What can we do now?"** Bennett (Nelson, 3s. 6d.). **Widdy-widdy-wurkey,** Fyleman (Blackwell, 3s. 6d.). **Wood that came back,** Leighton (Nicholson, 5s.). **The Youngest omnibus,** Vallance (Nelson, 7s. 6d.). **Young Fu,** Lewis (Harrap, 6s.).

VAGUE stirrings in the publishing world have resulted in the production of a larger number of intelligent books this year; there are signs that in the not-too-distant future the children's librarian may get her just reward. New subjects and better still new authors are making their appearance; something has had to be done to challenge the daily press in its effort to make the English child an authority on literature for 50 coupons. If our publishers continue to venture for the next twelve months, I suspect that one or two old ladies will have to retire to some southern watering-place. But they die hard. We may gloat over the advancement this year, but an hour at one of the Christmas bookstalls smothered in bumper books and annuals will convince us that we are just where we were last year. Not until the libraries can assure financial support for the better-produced and inevitably higher-priced book, shall we find that the annual and the bumper are things of the past. One or two publishers to my own knowledge would be glad of an opportunity to cease competing in this trade.

But for what we have received let us be truly thankful. Father Christmas this year was taken by Mr. Jonathan Cape, who has discharged the duty in years past with sureness of touch and lightness of heart. A new Kästner, a Ransome, and a book by Harry Graham form his surprise for this year. *Coot club* lives up to the reputation of its predecessors; and never have I heard of a Ransome story that is too long. The efforts of this club to protect the nest of their favourite bird result in an absorbing story of hide and seek in the waters of Norfolk. The new Kästner book, *The Flying classroom*, is the first original school story since "Stalky and Co." Whether it will be appreciated is another matter; it is not Emil, but it is good. The trio is completed with Harry Graham's *Happy families* (not to be confused with the early Southwold book and the card game of the same name). Three delightful children having rather incredible adventures with burglars and dukes; what a pity it is that the author often becomes a little too grown-up! I'm sure that there must be more real children round Mr. Cape's printing presses than in any similar place in this country.

A spate of books about horses. An old prophecy has come true, and we see horses ceasing to work for their living, and becoming a luxury rapidly acquired by the bourgeoisie. Pony clubs have encouraged too many of these books to be written, each one hoping to attain the success of "Black Beauty." Out of the mass let me choose two. A *Tale of two horses* (Tschiffely) describes the lives of the two animals in the famous ride. This is a welcome production. The original Tschiffely is much too heavy for even the older boys. A piebald pony, given the name of *Crazy Quilt*, joins a circus, and makes an amusing story for smaller people, most of whom have a secret passion for circus riding. Large print and good illustrations are likely to make this book very popular. Superb photographs distinguish *Infants of the zoo*, studies of animals in their most appealing stage. Children and parents coo over this book.

Two books on a most neglected subject are Mrs. Lewis's *Young Fu*—a tale of the Upper Yangtze; and *A Pageant of Chinese history*. For librarians, they are the best double of the year, and the tale of Young Fu is possibly the finest book of the season. His life as a coppersmith's apprentice in modern Chungking should lead towards the exploration of the customs and fortunes of China through the ages. The second book is competent, but a little pedantic and dry; this is one of the cases where the child will learn more from the novel than the history, and the non-fiction percentage is defeated once more. Two more volumes in the "Tales of Action" series. Good reading for boys.

As in other years, the girls fare badly. Can any children's librarian give the reason why publishers leave books for girls so severely alone, or find any girls' book worthy to stand beside Jock of the Bushveld? A *Royal cinderella*, which is a retold edition of Margaret Irwin's *Royal Flush*, is very acceptable, but merely emphasizes the scarcity of any original authors for girls.

A couple of new arrivals have joined the nursery zoo. *Toutou*, the French poodle, and *Barbar*, the baby elephant, are sure to reign supreme for a long time. What a pity that the size of the latter makes it such a difficult proposition for most junior libraries—rebinding would be out of the question, and price prevents a regular replacement of the old copy.

The fact that both children are Irish explains such a lot of the adventures in *The Turf-cutter's donkey*. Eileen, child of the banshees, has some wonderful experiences with leprechauns, tinkers, and Firbolgs. Nine-year-olds will revel in this book and its peculiar atmosphere.

Simple rhymes from all countries have been translated by Rose Fyleman in *Widdy-widdy-wurkey* (is the name of my turkey). By her efforts, too, we can

read Karen Michaelis's *Bibi goes travelling*. The incomparable Bibi should need no introduction, and her latest exploits are almost as good as her first. One more "repeat order." Another Baker book—*Polly-who-did-as-she-was-told*. There is more provision for the little ones to-day than would have been thought possible five years ago.

Although *Alice in orchestra-land* is a valuable book for the young student, it irritated me, because Alice should not be plagiarized, and the illustrations are scrappy and indistinct. But with so much orchestral music in the curricula of the schools this book becomes a necessity.

There is an increasing demand for collections of children's plays. Several good volumes have made their appearance this year, and will doubtless all find their way to the library shelves. One in particular stands out because of the ease with which the plays could be performed by a company of small players with limited resources. This is Noel Streatfield's *Children's matinée*; all the plays have been tested by actual production, and the dress and stage notes are invaluable. Schools and libraries where a Christmas play is the custom will welcome this book. With it I would place *What can we do now?* answering the child's eternal question at parties and any other time. This same author's *Let's do a play* should be the guide to every child producer.

Overcoming my prejudice against anything suggestive of the omnibus volume, I must mention here *The Youngest omnibus* and *The Christmas holiday book*, to be borrowed from the Library when the time hangs heavy in the holidays. The last one is essentially a book for the winter holidays, and a complement to Eleanor Graham's *Welcome Christmas*; the other is seasonable at any time.

To the child who enjoyed last year's *Pollycon*, and to the harassed parent who hates questions, *News for children* will be a godsend. Each topical phrase is made the subject of a short letter explaining most lucidly the necessary points. The "Discovery" books continue in their good work of modernizing the non-fiction. *Underground railways* will appeal to all boys, whether Londoners or not. And surprisingly good value at half a crown.

Two last tips. Be sure to acquire a copy of Helen Waddell's *Beasts and saints* for the teachers who use your library, and for yourself if story hours are part of your stock-in-trade. There is a tendency to regard it as adult stock—I do not recommend it for children, it is too scholastic. Clare Leighton's *Wood that came back* will most certainly be bought. No librarian could resist it. But it will break your heart if it comes back soiled.

THE DIVISIONS

MIDLAND DIVISION

THE first professional meeting ever held at Stoke-on-Trent took place on Thursday, 15th November, when a joint meeting of the Birmingham and District Branch and the A.A.L. Section (Midland Division) was arranged.

The proceedings commenced with an inspection of the Burslem Public Library, where the visitors were much interested in the successful conversion of the old Town Hall into an open-access lending library. Following the inspection, the senior members were conducted over the pottery manufactory of Messrs. Doultons, Ltd., and were shown the many processes which produce the beautiful wares of this famous firm.

Meanwhile, the junior members gathered in the Council Chamber at the Hanley Town Hall under the chairmanship of Mr. G. J. Dolman, F.L.A. (Birmingham Public Libraries), to hear a paper by Mr. K. D. Miller (Stoke-on-Trent Public Libraries) on "The Pros and cons of State control of libraries." After outlining the haphazard growth of the library movement in England, Mr. Miller referred to the backwardness of many areas at the present time and the need for some stimulus to effective development. It was doubtful whether State control would benefit the towns and cities, and future legislation may bring many existing backward areas up to scratch without central control. The co-operation already organized between libraries shows that the library movement is very much alive and State control may not be necessary.

After a vigorous discussion, in which several members took part, Mr. Miller was heartily thanked for his paper.

At the evening meeting, under the chairmanship of Mr. H. M. Cashmore, F.L.A. (City Librarian, Birmingham), a paper entitled "Library work in a Federated District" was read by Mr. A. J. Averill (Chief Librarian, Stoke-on-Trent), who gave a very interesting account of the library problems raised by the amalgamation in March 1910 of the six districts which now form the city of Stoke-on-Trent.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Averill was moved by Mr. E. Austin Hinton, B.A., F.L.A. (City Librarian, Coventry), seconded by Councillor Lacon (Oldbury), and supported by several speakers.

COUNCIL NOTES

THE Council met on Wednesday, 14th November, and some interesting matters came up for discussion.

The programme of meetings for October–December 1935 was considered: a discussion on "A Rational library service" was arranged for October, and a possible meeting may be held in December at the new Golders Green branch, Hendon. The programme secretary reported good attendances at the social evenings at Chaucer House.

The editor reported an increasing interest in "Recommended books" and enquiries from a number of libraries. Circulars describing the publication were to be sent to selected libraries. The proposed bibliography of basic stock was reconsidered in amended form, and it was decided to invite experts (other than librarians) to review the various sections. The Forward Policy Committee are to circulate a list of essential textbooks throughout the country. A standard notebook for students taking correspondence courses was adopted, and it was decided to publish a revised edition of Sayers' "The Library Committee" as an A.A.L. pamphlet. W. B. S.

Library List of Additions, 1934

Akers, S. G. Simple library cataloguing. 2nd ed., 1933.
Bennett, W. The Student library assistant. 1933.
Bishop, W. W. Practical handbook of modern library cataloguing. 2nd ed., 1927.
Bliss, H. E. The Organization of knowledge and the system of the sciences. 1929.
Bodleian Library, Oxford. Rules for the author catalogue of books published in or after 1920. 1923.
Bostwick, A. E. (*ed.*). Popular libraries of the world. 1933.
Brebner, J., *and others* (*eds.*). Classics of the Western World. 1934.
British Museum. Rules for compiling the catalogues . . . in the British Museum. 1927.
Campbell, F. Remarks addressed to members of the Library Assistants' Association. 1895.
Mitchell, J. M. (*ed.*). Small municipal libraries. 2nd ed., 1934.
Sears, M. E. List of subject-headings for small libraries. 3rd ed., 1933.

NEW MEMBERS, NOV. 1934

CENTRAL. Dorothy Bateman, Marion R. Gleed (Bristol); Miss E. V. Cooper (Hornsey); W. C. Cunnington (Hounslow); Catherine T. Cuthill (Fife County, Kirkaldy); W. M. Duncan; D. M. Torbet (Dundee); A. E. Goring (West Ham); Miss N. M. Johnson (St. Albans);

I. R. V. Johnstone (Bridgwater); M. J. Lloyd (Cornwall County, Truro); D. Long (Cork County, Cork); Miss K. Moore (Luton); Albert J. I. Parrott (Putney); Ellen Power (University College, Dublin); L. G. Tootell (Devon County, Exeter); Doreen H. M. Weston (Lambeth); Audrey R. White (Weston-super-Mare).

Eastern.—Jean F. Cumming (Norwich); J. Lockwood (Scunthorpe).

Midland.—Miss J. B. Smith (Birmingham).

North-Eastern.—Ernest F. Ferry (Gateshead).

North-Western.—James Bailey; Jonathan Elliott (St. Helens); Stanley Dean (Oldham); M. Edwards (Liverpool); Miss M. J. Foley; Miss N. Scott (Waterloo); Elsie Jagger (Shaw); Marion Kershaw (Cheetham Hill, Manchester); J. H. Nicholson (Stalybridge); Gwendoline Varley (Dewsbury).

South Wales.—Kathleen F. Devereux (Cardiff); Miss S. Parfitt (Neath); Miss K. M. Davies (National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth).

South-Western.—Esmé Webb (Winchester).

Resignations.—Miss A. Deane, Miss E. M. Forfar, Miss E. M. Hodson (Liverpool); Miss R. Borcham (Southend); Miss E. Cowens (Sunderland); E. H. Ellis (Cardiff); Miss M. Turner (Newcastle).

G. BLUNT & SONS, LTD.

BOUND FOR SERVICE

For the latest developments in

LIBRARY REBINDING

by the "Ideal" Guarded Every Leaf Process

THE FACSIMILE PUBLISHERS' BINDING

which is now so famous—over 1,600 bindings in stock—at 1/11 per volume, Cr. 8vo.

Lists of these bindings are issued and sent to all Libraries

Our book department also issues lists of books bound in this and other attractive styles at "Economy" prices

Visits from Public Librarians and Assistants welcomed to our works and showrooms

NORTH ACTON ROAD, HARLESDEN, LONDON, N.W.10

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

THE FIRST CO-OPERATIVE BULLETIN

Enquiries to:—THE HON. EDITOR,
KENSAL RISE PUBLIC LIBRARY,
LONDON, N.W.10

A. M. HALDANE LIBRARY BOOK SUPPLY CO.
Public Libraries and County Libraries Supplied
Promptly with New Books and Remainders
4 CARLTON STREET, LOWER REGENT STREET, LONDON
Telephone and Telegraphic Address: WHITEHALL 6335 LONDON